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# 'It's the Economy, Stupid'

## Popular Support for EU Accession in the Czech Republic\*

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**Abstract:** In this article, a comparison is made between economic and identity explanations of preferences toward EU membership in the Czech Republic. This research demonstrates that economics rather than identity is a more powerful explanation of public opinion on accession. With regard to economic explanations of public support for integration three models are examined – a winners and losers model, an international trade liberalisation model, and a foreign direct investment model. A comparison of these three models shows that support for accession was primarily based on attitudes toward foreign direct investment. Moreover, contemplating employment opportunities within the EU following accession was also an important factor. Contrary to previous research the empirical evidence presented in this article suggests that being a winner or loser in the post-communist transition process was not the strongest factor explaining popular support for membership. The results presented should not be taken to imply that instrumental rather than ideological or affect-based motivations determine general attitudes toward integration. On the specific question of vote choice in the accession referendum instrumental economic considerations were most important.

**Keywords:** European Union, accession, economy, identity, integration

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## Introduction

Membership of the European Union (EU) was a key goal for all post-communist governments in the Czech Republic. Nonetheless, since the mid-1990s the European Union issue has been one of the key dividing lines within Czech party politics, although it has not been a central issue during general election campaigns. While public opinion in the Czech Republic was consistently supportive of the process of accession, its level of support was one of the lowest among the ten states in the May 2004 enlargement [Linden and Pohlman 2003; Taggart and Szczesniak 2004; Kopecký and Holsteyn 2006]. In one of the few comprehensive English-language accounts, Hanley [2004: 691] summarised popular support for accession as being based on 'cues from longstanding positive linkages of "Europe" with democracy, market reform and Czech identity'. Moreover, this account stressed that the referendum campaign had little effect, as citizens had for the most part made up their mind years earlier.

Domestic and international opinion polls reveal that a key factor for those sceptical about EU membership was economic concerns and more specifically fears about an increase in prices and unemployment. Reservations about loss of national identity motivated only a very small minority of those polled [see Hanley 2004: 694–5]. To date there has been no systematic individual level analysis of preferences in the Czech accession referendum of June 2003. This article aims to make a contribution to this field of research by examining what economic factors shaped attitudes toward membership prior to accession and to explore whether a citizen's sense of identity also played some role.

Scholarly research on public support for European integration is primarily based on survey data from Western Europe that has been examined since the early 1970s. The question that has arisen with the two most recent waves of enlargement is whether these 'West European' models of public opinion toward the EU are applicable to a Union of twenty-seven member states. Scepticism stems from the fact that in Western Europe public opinion on integration sprung from citizens living in stable liberal democratic polities with established market economies. Within post-communist states mass attitudes toward integration were grounded in polities and economies still in a process of transition where accession represented a further movement of change.

Moreover, Rohrschneider and Whitefield [2006] argue that the current understanding of public support for integration is based on elites and masses accepting the merits of liberal democracy and free markets. Within Central and Eastern Europe there is still considerable resistance among political elites and substantial blocks of voters to unfettered capitalism [Večerník and Matějů 1999: 185ff]. Consequently, these scholars contend that citizens within post-communist states do not judge the EU in terms of expected economic benefits, but more in terms of underlying economic and political values. In sum, Rohrschneider and Whitefield [2006: 147] contend that in post-communist states public opinion on integration is more ideological than instrumental.

In this article, it will be argued that while ideological factors may be more important than instrumental ones in shaping general attitudes toward integration, on the specific issue of accession economic considerations were most important. While there are undeniably merits in questioning the dominance and nature of economic explanations of public support for accession in Central and Eastern Europe, it is certain that economics was a primary consideration during the 2004 referendum campaigns in states such as the Czech Republic and Poland [Hanley 2004: 694; Markowski and Tucker 2005: 427, 430].

Here we will focus our attention on the Czech Republic and examine more specifically what were the economic and identity bases of popular support for EU membership? This raises an additional question: how do economic and identity factors shape public opinion toward the European Union? In the first section, the economic bases for popular support for European integration in Western Europe will be outlined. Thereafter, there is a brief review of the literature on public opinion towards EU accession in 2004 within post-communist states. Here we outline three economic explanations of why the Czech public might have supported accession, and we formulate a number of testable hypotheses. This is followed in the third section by a discussion of how a citizen's sense of identity is seen by scholars to influence attitudes toward the integration project. In the fourth section, there is a discussion of the data and methodology used in this paper. In the penultimate section, the empirical findings are presented and this is followed by some concluding remarks.

### **Economic explanations of citizen support for European integration in Western Europe**

While economic explanations of public support for European integration have been a dominant theme, this fact should not be taken to mean that such research has adopted a consistent perspective. In fact, this literature exhibits considerable differences in terms of the level of analysis (i.e. aggregate, individual, and multi-level datasets) and the use of indicators (i.e. subjective and/or objective). Consequently, while economic explanations may appear simple and straightforward, the extant literature paints a more complex picture. For example, the exact effect of macro-economic variables, such as the level of unemployment and inflation, on support for EU membership has been shown to be associated with both positive and negative orientations toward integration.

Our goal here is not to critically review the literature on economic explanations, but to outline the types of models tested. Table 1 summarises the two main streams within this field of research and illustrates the differing levels of analysis and mechanisms underlying the key economic explanations employed. It should be noted that the distinction between micro- and macro-level explanations used in this article is not absolute. In the literature on public support for European integration, use of micro- or macro-level models is often determined

**Table 1. Summary of economic explanations of public support for European integration and EU membership**

| Criteria                                    | Reasons  |
|---|--|
| Main assumption                             | Citizens' attitudes toward European integration are based on a cost / benefit analysis of the merits of membership.  |
| Conceptualisation of the EU                 | The EU is an international regime that facilitates economic exchange and consequently has important distributional effects for citizens.   |
| Level of analysis and key mechanisms tested | <p><b>MACRO-ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS</b></p> <p>(1) Net EU Budgetary Transfers Model</p> <p>Citizens who live in member states who are net receivers of EU funding will for sociotropic reasons have higher levels of support for European integration than citizens in other member states [Carrubba 1997; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Anderson and Reichert 1996].</p> <p>(2) Sociotropic Retrospective Model</p> <p>Collective rather than personal evaluations of economic well-being shape attitudes toward the integration project [Gabel and Palmer 1995; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Gabel 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Rohrschneider 2002; Anderson 1998; Gabel and Palmer 1995; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993]. Moreover, support for integration is based on retrospective rather than prospective assessments of national economic conditions [Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Anderson 1998; Christin 2005].</p> <p>(3) Institutional Ideology Model</p> <p>Support of integration depends on the form of capitalism present in a country. States with a Rhenish capital model will be most favourable toward integration [Brinegar, Jolly and Kitschelt 2004; Brinegar and Jolly 2005].</p> <p><b>MICRO-ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS</b></p> <p>(1) International Trade Liberalisation Model</p> <p>The EU promotes growth through capital transfers and market liberalisation and this process favours those in economies who possess scarce endowments. Typically, within Western Europe integration is seen to favour those with higher levels of education and skills [Gabel 1998a; Anderson and Reichert 1996; Rodrik 1997; Scheve and Slaughter 2001].</p> <p>(2) Winners and Losers Model</p> <p>Citizens in post-communist states who have benefited from the transition process are more likely to support EU accession than those who have suffered. Moreover, supporters of the free market in post-communist states will be most in favour of membership [Tucker et al. 2002; Doyle and Fidrmuc 2004; Christin 2005].</p> |

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### (3) Foreign Direct Investment Model

Accession is likely to increase FDI and hence have economic redistributional effects creating winners and losers. In capital scarce economies FDI will increase employment and training. However, increasing levels of foreign ownership may lead to greater public controversy and less support for an accession process that is associated with FDI [Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2004].

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by the availability of data. In this article, the categorisation of models such as FDI as micro-level reflects the fact that we have an individual-level survey available for analysis. This is not to suggest that FDI has only individual-level effects and does not have important macro-level effects such as those associated with EU budgetary transfers. In the following two sub-sections, a brief outline will be given of these micro- and macro-economic perspectives for research on the EU-15 member states.

### *Macro-economic explanations*

Explanations of public support based on national economies are based on the simple idea that whatever is good for the country is also of benefit to the individual. However, the factors and manner in which macro-economic factors influence attitudes toward European integration has never been definitively established. This failure stems in part from methodological differences, where the models tested, variables used, and countries and time periods examined have varied. Consequently, this literature has not provided systematic findings. Here we will briefly review three strands in this research.

### *Net EU budgetary transfers model*

According to this model if a member state is a net recipient of EU funding this will improve the infrastructure and services used by citizens [Bosch and Newton 1995; Carrubba 1997; Gabel and Whitten 1997; Anderson and Reichert 1996]. Moreover, this approach suggests that if a country changes from being a net receiver to being a net contributor to the EU then popular support for integration should also change. If this is the case, *ceteris paribus* popular support for integration should decline if a country changes from being a recipient to being a contributor to the EU's budget. Ireland represents a case where this change in financial status occurred in 2007. According to the net budgetary transfers model, popular support for integration in Ireland should decline after this year. The evidence from Eurobarometer data (i.e. the question of whether the country has benefited from EU membership)

reveals that there has been a decline in the perceived benefits of EU membership in Ireland since 1997 – a full decade before this budgetary change came into effect. Such evidence suggests that payments from, or contributions to, the EU are not the only considerations used by citizens to assess the integration project.

#### *Sociotropic retrospective model*

Many of the economic explanations of mass support for integration emphasise that attitudes toward how the national economy has performed, rather than prospective individual level assessments, are the most important. In examining the relationship between macro-economic variables and support for the EU, previous research has suggested that GDP growth, inflation, unemployment, and intra-EU trade are important. However, the evidence that national economic conditions shape public opinion on integration has not always been consistent [Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Duch and Taylor 1997]. For example, we noted earlier that the exact effect of macro-economic variables such as level of unemployment and inflation on support for EU membership has been shown to both increase and decrease pro-integration opinion [Anderson and Kaltenhaler 1996; Gabel 1998c]. Such problems, while stemming in part from methodological differences, probably also reflect the fact that citizens' assessments of national economic performance are influenced by political factors, such as key political events and length of membership [Christin and Hug 2002; Bosch and Newton 1995].

#### *Institutional ideology model*

Our final explanation contends that national institutions mediate individual evaluations of the economic effects of European integration. In practice this means that the institutional ideology and associated preferences of a state have a significant effect on transmitting the costs and benefits of European integration through market liberalisation. Within the EU three ideal types of capitalism may be identified – liberal-market capitalism, Rhenish capitalism, and social-democratic capitalism, where the liberal-market model is often juxtaposed with the social-democratic one in terms of wealth distribution. In this respect, the prevailing argument is that the middle ground adopted by the Rhenish model helps explain which form of capitalism is most conducive in institutional and ideological terms to mass support for integration [Brinegar, Jolly and Kitschelt 2004; Brinegar and Jolly 2005]. From a methodological perspective, it can be argued that this approach suffers from *endogeneity*. This is because the states most associated with the historical development of European integration from 1957 have been adherents to the Rhenish conception of capitalism. In a sense, support for integration is explained in terms of those states that have the longest and most successful history of integration.



### *Micro-economic explanations*

In the micro-economic approach, support for integration stems from benefits that accrue to the individual from greater mobility of capital and labour. Much of this literature is based on the effects proposed by trade liberalisation theory and more specifically the Heckscher-Olin model of trade. One of the mechanisms proposed to support this perspective is that integration gives higher rewards to those with greater human capital resources [Gabel 1998b; Scheve and Slaughter 2001]. This occurs via a variety of channels where integration through market liberalisation favours those sectors of the economy that have scarcities of either capital or labour. The key point here is that prevailing national or even regional economic conditions will give differential incentives to individuals with varying levels of age, education, and position within the labour market to support integration. In relatively rich countries, individuals who possess capital or high skills will favour greater access to markets where capital and skills are scarce. Low skill labour in such countries will fear a loss of investment and future jobs prospects, and therefore oppose further integration. In contrast, with an abundance of cheap labour – a typical feature of less developed economies – workers will favour foreign investment of capital as it brings with it more employment opportunities. However, skilled workers will fear loss of position or perhaps unemployment in a changed labour market. One consequence of the twin processes of liberalisation and integration is the rolling back of the welfare state, a trend that has greater impact on those who are more likely to become unemployed. One key feature of liberalising markets is the role played by foreign direct investment (FDI). However, to date there has been little research on how attitudes toward FDI influence orientation toward the EU in Western Europe. This is a topic we will return to below.

### **Economic bases of popular support for EU membership in post-communist states**

Discussions of public support for accession in post-communist states is intricately bound up with attitudes toward transition toward a free market economy and support for associated liberal democratic institutions, property rights, and wide ranging changes in systems of production and social welfare. Although the goal of all transition processes has been to improve the welfare of citizens, in most post-communist states the costs of transition were often felt before the benefits [Rose and Haerpfer 1995: 432; Rose, Mischler and Haerpfer 1998: 200]. In this respect, citizens in post-communist states when considering the economic effects of accession were faced with contemplating what were the likely economic costs and benefits ensuing from EU membership for citizens. Obviously, there would be both winners and losers. In addressing this question, the growing literature on public support for European integration and accession in Central and Eastern Europe has adopted a number of distinct explanations. In general these approaches represent extensions of previous research undertaken in Western Europe.



*Macro-economic explanations in Central and Eastern Europe*

There has been relatively little systematic comparative research on economic attitudes toward European integration in Central and Eastern Europe because of data considerations. One intuitive explanation is that post-communist citizens supported accession in order to receive structural and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds from Brussels, i.e. a net budgetary transfer model.

Another explanation (which may be seen as a variant of the sociotropic retrospective model) as to why aggregated public opinion would express particular opinions toward integration is based on the idea that the countries that suffered most in the transition process would feel that they have less to lose in transferring authority and sovereignty to the EU [Sánchez-Cuenca 2000: 151; Christin 2005: 39]. In contrast, public opinion in the post-communist states where the transition process was relatively successful are expected to be more sceptical of the economic benefits of EU membership. This is because such citizens would have more to lose. To summarise, depending on the nature of the transition process, citizens in post-communist states living in different national conditions would be expected to have different attitudes toward EU membership. Christin [2005: 43–49] has found that macro-level factors have the greatest impact on public opinion on the EU when national conditions are in 'bad shape'.

Although the impact of institutional ideology in Western Europe is judged in terms of the type of capitalism, the evidence from post-communist states suggests that economic values are important. Particularly within situations of rapid political and economic change and hence high uncertainty citizens may fall back on regime ideals in assessing the benefits of EU membership [Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2006: 148]. Significantly, in many post-communist states citizens still believe in socialist ideals such as an egalitarian society [Evans and Whitefield 1995]. For this reason, economic values may trump instrumental reasoning in shaping mass attitudes toward the EU.

*Micro-economic explanations in Central and Eastern Europe*

In the literature on public opinion toward integration among post-communist states at least three different micro-economic approaches have been adopted. These models represent a distinct line of research from what came before, because of the very different circumstances underpinning the enlargements of 2004 and 2007. As our focus of interest is public opinion on accession in the Czech Republic, we will concentrate in this article on three micro-economic models. Although no direct reference is made to expectations for social improvements in this research, owing to data limitations, this is not to suggest that such considerations were unimportant. Within the Czech Republic there is considerable support for social democratic principles. For convenience, in this research, such social welfare-based expectations are subsumed under more specific micro-economic perspectives.

As this is a single country study, examination of institutional effects is impossible, and data for macro-economic analysis are not readily available. Therefore, in this sub-section there will be a brief presentation of the three models reviewed. On this basis some hypotheses will be formulated combined with some brief description of the survey questions used to test these hypotheses. More details of the data used will be given in the next section and in the appendix.

### *Winners and Losers Model*

The first micro-economic model relates specifically to Central and Eastern Europe, where it has been argued that those who have been 'winners' in the free market reforms in post-communist states such as the Czech Republic will be most supportive of integration. In Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky's [2002] 'winners and losers' model there are two key explanatory variables explaining support for accession.

First, those who have gained from the post-communist transition are more likely to support accession than those who have lost.<sup>1</sup> In this article, being a winner or loser is based on a summated rating scale of seven items. Four of the items relate to the respondents' own subjective sense of the current economic situation of the household and how this has changed over the previous year. In addition, the respondents' assessment of whether their household had sufficient income and whether the household had been able to save in the last five years were used as indicators. The last three items refer to objective measures of success – owning a video cassette player, owning a car, and having access to the internet (see appendix for details).

The second key factor for Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky [2002] is if a respondent is a supporter of the free market. In the survey dataset examined here a better measure is available, where it is possible to identify citizens who have a primarily free market orientation in contrast to defining themselves first and foremost as a social democrat, communist, environmentalist, etc. It is also possible to learn about respondents' current feelings toward the Czech economy (on a –100 to +100 scale) and their prospective view of the Czech economy in five years time (again on a –100 to +100 scale). These two 'thermometer' type scales are useful in detecting some sense of economic optimism among the public, and how this may be associated with attitudes toward accession. Using these survey questions three hypotheses regarding the winners and losers model will be tested.

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<sup>1</sup> Fidrmuc [2000] argues in a similar 'winners' and 'losers' vein that the former (entrepreneurs, white-collar workers, and people with university education) vote for right-wing pro-reform parties, while the latter (the unemployed, retired people, blue-collar workers, and farm workers) vote for left-wing parties. This analysis shows economic performance has a strong impact on electoral choice.

- H.1 Winners in the post-communist transition process will be more supportive of EU accession than losers.
- H.2 Those citizens who have a primarily free-market orientation will be most positive about accession.
- H.3 Those who feel positive about the economy at the current time and have optimistic expectations for future domestic economic performance will be supportive of accession.<sup>2</sup>

### *International Trade Liberalisation Model*

A more general argument is that a core feature of European integration is the liberalisation of trade. According to international trade theory, liberalisation of trade is likely to have differential benefits for various economic interest groups. It is only recently that attempts have been made to use international trade theory to explain individual level preferences for transnational processes [Scheve and Slaughter 2001]. According to the Heckscher-Ohlin factor proportions theory there should be strongest support for freer trade, and by implication accession to the EU, among low-skilled workers in national economies that are typified as being labour abundant.

The assumption here is that in comparison to the EU the Czech economy has a greater supply of labour than capital. However, within the Czech Republic there are strong regional differences, measured as relative per capita GDP. It is assumed here that this variable is highly correlated with the human capital endowments of specific regions.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, it is more appropriate to treat individual preferences based on interests resulting from different human capital endowments as being mediated by the effects of the regional economy in which a respondent lives. Therefore, an interaction variable of skill by regional per capita GDP was constructed. The skill level of respondents was measured in terms of both education level and occupation [Mayda and Rodrik 2001; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2002: 162–5]. However, empirical analysis indicated that the education measure yielded more robust results. In addition, the survey examined contains a subjective assessment of the willingness of Czech citizens to use the opportu-

<sup>2</sup> Previous research supportive of this hypothesis may be found in Anderson [1998] and Rohrschneider [2002]. For the accession member states, see Tverdova and Anderson [2004].

<sup>3</sup> Within the Czech Republic there are significant regional differences. The Prague Region in 2001 had an unemployment rate of 3.7%, and a GDP 2.18 times the national average was strongly supportive of accession. In contrast, the relatively well-urbanised Karlovy Vary Region (in the northwest of the country, on the German border and a stronghold of KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia)) had an unemployment rate of 10.1% and a GDP level less than four-fifths of the national average. It was unique in being the only region to be against accession in November 2001 [see Kostecký and Čermák 2004]. Markowski and Tucker [2005: 17] make a similar argument with regard to the accession referendum in Poland.

nities of labour mobility following accession. On the basis of these trade theory considerations four hypotheses will be examined.

- H.4a Low-skilled workers in poorer regions of the Czech Republic would have been most supportive of EU accession.
- H.4b Medium-skilled workers in relatively rich regions would have been less supportive of accession.
- H.4c High-skilled workers in relatively rich regions would have supported accession.
- H.5 Those workers who were most predisposed to work outside the Czech Republic in another EU member state would be supportive of the benefits of mobility offered with accession.

#### *Foreign Direct Investment Model*

A key economic impact of European integration is the expected growth of foreign direct investment (FDI). Despite the importance of this facet of integration on accession there has been little research on how public opinion toward FDI might shape attitudes toward accession. This is surprising because the issue of foreign ownership has been controversial in many post-communist states. Examining the link between public support for foreign ownership (a core facet of FDI), Rohrschneider and Whitefield [2004] found that support for the latter and having a positive image of the EU was lower in more democratic states in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, higher levels of FDI at the national level were associated with lower levels of support for foreign ownership. However, national levels of FDI had no significant impact on attitudes toward the EU.<sup>4</sup> The strategy adopted here is different, as use will be made of individual-level subjective measures to assess the impact of this variable.

Our expectation is that the economic effects of integration operating through FDI will have redistributional consequences, where some groups will be 'winners' and others will be 'losers'. Unfortunately, there is little theoretical work specifying which domestic interest groups should be most supportive of FDI [Frieden and Martin 2002: 128]. What international trade theory does say is that FDI results in a complex mix of costs and benefits. While FDI can lead to greater investment in skills and training of local labour forces much of this benefit depends on the differential technological and productive capacities of foreign and domestic firms. If there is too great a differential FDI leads to greater inequality between skilled and unskilled workers [Blomström et al. 1999; Taylor and Driffield 2000].

<sup>4</sup> Rohrschneider and Whitefield [2004: 333] report that their EU model (Table 4) should be interpreted with caution as the multi-level estimations may be influenced by the smaller degrees of freedom of the macro-level variables.

In political terms, FDI was an important issue because the Czech Republic was unique in having virtually no foreign investment between 1948 and 1989. The economic policies of the Civic Democrat (ODS) governments from 1992 to 1998 emphasised domestic rather foreign ownership. These policies were implemented through state-owned banks providing funds for domestic firms. However, many of these firms were unviable in a liberalised market. As a result, unemployment increased as many domestic companies collapsed. During this period economic policy was characterised as 'under-regulated, under-capitalized ... [leading to an] ... inefficient private sector dominated by politically connected insider groups' [Hanley 2000: 4]. Nonetheless, the number of foreign businesses in the Czech Republic increased ninefold between 1993 and 1997 [Večerník and Matějů 1999: 85].

From 1998 onwards Social Democrat (ČSSD) administrations implemented a new set of policies that strongly supported foreign direct investment through a system of incentive packages and the construction of industrial parks in areas of high unemployment. Despite these two distinct policy periods the Czech Republic nonetheless has had one of the highest levels of net FDI inflows in Central and Eastern Europe. According to World Bank Development Indicator data, net inflows of FDI increased from USD 257 million in 1989 to USD 8.23 billion in 2002 – which represents a thirty-two-fold increase in fourteen years. A central question is: what effect did this have on Czech industry?

One of the few studies of the impact of FDI on domestic firms found (using firm level panel data between 1994 and 2001) that foreign firms did 'crowd out' domestic Czech ones, but this was a short-term effect. However, success for foreign firms also increased the likelihood of success for domestic ones where increased demand for goods and services within the Czech Republic was the primary basis for growth. Moreover, technology spillovers primarily aided domestic firms in high technology industries [Djankov and Hoekman 2000; Kosová 2006]. This evidence suggests that FDI may have had some impact on Czech public opinion and perhaps attitudes toward EU membership. In this research, support for FDI was measured using answers to five different survey items relating to this issue (see appendix for details). Consequently, using this data the hypothesis to be tested may be formulated as follows.<sup>5</sup>

H.6 Czech citizens who believed that foreign direct investment (FDI) had a positive impact on the national economy would have supported EU membership as facilitating this process.

<sup>5</sup> With six items it was possible to create a summated rating scale with high internal consistency (inter-item correlation, Cronbach alpha = .75) and thereby a superior indicator if only a single survey question were used.

## Identity explanations of support for integration

As the process of European integration promotes increasing economic and political interdependency, one consequence of these developments is a growth in multiculturalism while the differences between European nations decline. Therefore, although membership of the EU creates economic winners and losers there is also the possibility that it will 'provoke a sharp sense of identity loss among defenders of the nation' [McLaren 2002: 553]. However, the relationship between national identity (which is seen to be the strongest territorial identity in most European states) and attitudes toward European integration is not a simple one.

In some research the association between national identity and support for the integration project is positive [Citrin and Sides 2004: 170]. This may occur because citizens have more than one sense of identity where they feel local, regional, national, and supranational attachments in a manner that is both inclusive and integrative. Thus a variety of case studies suggest that a strong sense of identity at one level reinforce a citizen's sense of identity at other levels [Haesly 2001; Diez Medrano and Gutiérrez 2001]. In contrast, other research suggests a negative relationship, because European integration is perceived to be a threat to the nation and its culture and values [McLaren 2002; Carey 2002; Christin and Trechsel 2002]. Sometimes such fears are crystallised in the association between the degree of integration and the level of immigration [Luedtke 2005].

Such scholarship demonstrates that the link between identity and attitudes toward the EU are context dependent. An influential stream of research suggests that how the integration issue is framed in the national context may be critical in establishing positive or negative associations between national identity and support for the EU. For example, if citizens perceive national governance and democratic performance positively then there will be a positive link between sense of identity and attitudes toward the EU [Sánchez-Cuenca 2000; Rohrschneider 2002].

If we now turn our attention to the nature of national identity in the Czech Republic the survey evidence from the national identity modules of the International Social Science Project (ISSP) in 1995 and 2003 show important changes. These data reveal that Czech national identity declined in some key areas during the late 1990s. For example, national identity was most important in 1995, while by 2003 community identity had become ascendant. In addition, popular conceptualisations of citizenship shifted from being legalistic to ethno-cultural. Significantly, such changes in key political attitudes were associated with declining satisfaction and pride in the performance of the state [Vlachová and Řeháková 2004: 17–28].

Therefore, in the Czech Republic the national context immediately prior to accession in June 2003 was one of dissatisfaction with national politics. This situation resulted on the one hand in a weaker sense of national identity (and sense of patriotism) that was in turn associated with being positively pre-disposed toward the emergence of a European level of governance. Consequently, Czech citizens



with a weak sense of national identity were more likely to support the primacy of decisions made at the European rather than national level, even in situations of conflict. Moreover, such citizens were most in favour of a federal Europe [Vlachová and Řeháková 2004: 29–31].

On the basis of such empirical evidence and our brief review of the identity and integration literature, we may elaborate the following set of three hypotheses concerning the link between sense of identity and support for accession in the Czech Republic.

- H.7a Those who feared that the EU would lead to a loss of Czech sovereignty and that party politics was based on a struggle between national traditions and European integration would have opposed accession.
- H.7b Having a belief in defending national interests and feeling proud of Czech citizens would be negatively associated with voting for accession because of the perceived threat posed by aspects of integration such as loss of independence.
- H.7c Citizens with a strong sense of community rather than regional or national identity would have been most opposed to EU membership because they most acutely perceived European integration to be a threat to their ethno-cultural values.

## Data and methods

The analysis of public attitudes toward accession in the Czech Republic reported here relies on a mass face-to-face survey undertaken by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM – an independent state polling agency) between October 26 and November 5 in 2001 on 1199 adults aged fifteen years and older. In this research, only a subset of respondents aged seventeen years or older that were eligible to vote in the accession referendum of June 2003 are examined (N=1140).

Like all the main polling agencies in the Czech Republic, CVVM uses quota sampling on the basis of region (x8), size of community (x6), sex, age (x4), and education (x4).<sup>6</sup> Consequently, with a quota sampling methodology, non-response rate and weighting variable estimates are not available (see appendix).<sup>7</sup> A central concern among survey researchers with data derived from quota-controlled sampling is that the resulting information is problematic owing to non-representative strata and non-random selection within strata [Berinsky 2006: 506–9].

<sup>6</sup> The numbers in parentheses, e.g. (x4), refer to the number of categories used to create quota samples.

<sup>7</sup> Two versions of this survey data exist. The first is part of a pooled survey series deposited at the German Social Archive in Cologne, where all variable labels and documentation are in English. The second version is available from CVVM in the Czech language only. This dataset has a much more extensive set of variables and is the one used in this paper.



An analysis of the quality of survey work done by all of the main Czech polling agencies prior to the general election of 2002 found that CVVM adheres consistently to international polling industry standards. Moreover, the quality of the survey data produced by CVVM with regard to measurement validity and accuracy in making pre-election estimates of party support is generally superior to all the other main polling agencies within the Czech Republic. As CVVM follows standard polling practices and produced the most accurate election predictions between 2002 and 2004, this gives us confidence in the validity and reliability of the survey data used in this research [see Kreidl and Lebeda 2003; Krejčí 2004].

Turning now to the survey question used as the dependent variable in this research, we can see from the following item wording that those interviewed were offered four response options. 'If there were a referendum tomorrow on the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, would you vote for or against accession?' The response options were: 'for', 'against', 'would not vote', 'undecided' and 'don't know'.

Following a similar strategy as Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky [2002] the substantively similar responses of 'undecided' and 'don't know' were combined.<sup>8</sup> The theoretical expectation is that the individuals who responded, 'for', 'against', 'would not vote', or 'undecided/don't know' would be different. A series of Wald and likelihood ratio tests were used to investigate and confirm that combining any of these response options is not warranted.

As the dependent variable is unordered and nominal, a multinomial logit (MNL) modelling strategy was used to analyse the survey data [Scott-Long 1997: 151–178]. It should be noted that all the data, except the dependent variable, were rescaled (0–1) to aid interpretation. Therefore, as all measures have the same metric, those variables with larger coefficients in the same models presented have stronger effects.

However, logit regression coefficients are difficult to interpret because they are non-linear. Technically this means that while a change in the log odds ratio is constant for all levels across all variables, the value of discrete probabilities depends critically on the values of the variables. For example, the effect of being a winner in the post-communist transition process might increase the odds of supporting EU membership by a factor of ten, but the impact of an economic assessment is small if the odds of supporting accession were one in seven thousand. Therefore, in order to make the presentation of our MNL regression results more transparent some of the estimates will be presented within the next section as predicted probabilities and graphically.

<sup>8</sup> There is the temptation here to combine non-voting and uncommitted respondents. However, care has to be taken when combining response categories. For example, Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky [2002: 561] argue that Cichowski's [2000: 1255] strategy of combining undecided and non-voting respondents yielded misleading results.

## Empirical results

One important implication of the research results presented here is that the EU accession campaign may have had little effect in changing the minds of voters.<sup>9</sup> Eighteen months before the referendum poll, 44% of people supported accession while 14% were against. In the referendum of mid-June 2003, 42% of registered voters voted 'yes' while 12% voted 'no', with a turnout rate of 55%. The November 2001 survey results are within sampling error ( $\pm 3\%$ ) of the actual referendum result.<sup>10</sup>

Taking those respondents, aged seventeen years or more (and hence eligible voters in June 2003), who were 'undecided' (28%), 'would not vote' (6%), and had no opinion (9%), it is possible to account for most of the non-voters in the referendum 45% (42%). The assumption here is that those voters who gave no firm opinions in late 2001 were most likely to abstain in the accession referendum.

Many of the differences between the poll of late 2001 and the exit poll for the accession referendum shown in Table 2 relate to the impact of turnout. In the survey of late 2001 many more younger and middle-aged people stated that they would vote than were interviewed after voting in the exit poll. Differential turnout on the basis of age is a well-known feature in all elections.

Furthermore, a higher turnout rate in the exit poll among those with an elementary education than that estimated by the poll of late 2001 is not surprising [see Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980]. This effect is partly based on age as a higher proportion of senior citizens received only an elementary education, in addition many of this group live in rural areas with strong social networks that foster the norm that voting is a civic duty. The most interesting differences are those relating to the unemployed who appear to have been convinced between November 2001 and June 2003 to vote 'yes'. Table 2 indicates that unemployed citizens' support for accession grew by almost 48% during this period. Equally dramatic was the growth in support among voters of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) for EU membership, which went up by almost 95%. However, these results may be more apparent than real owing to social desirability effects in survey interviews [Tourangeau, Rips and Rasinski 2000].

It is well known internationally that the number of respondents who will admit to being unemployed is often much less than those registered as being unemployed. In the Czech Republic there was an official unemployment rate of 9.8%

<sup>9</sup> Hanley [2004: 710] notes that the 'yes' campaign dominated the 'no' one. In terms of finances the 'yes' campaign spent two hundred times more money than the 'no' side, which was in addition considered to be ineffective. For many, accession was considered a *fait accompli* prior to the referendum. The acrimonious debates during the campaign were less about accession and more concerned with the nature of integration and its impact on the Czech Republic.

<sup>10</sup> Lebeda [2004: 219–221] shows that final polls before the referendum (i.e. June 2003) were also reasonably accurate in predicting both turnout and support for accession.

**Table 2. Comparison of the October–November 2001 survey and the exit poll results in June 2003 (%)**

|                           | Oct.–Nov. 2001<br>Yes | Exit Poll,<br>June 2003<br>Yes | Difference<br>Oct.–Nov. 2001<br>– June 2003 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Gender                    |                       |                                |   |
| Male                      | 76                    | 77                             | –1  |
| Female                    | 75                    | 78                             | –3  |
| Age                       |                       |                                |   |
| 18–29 yrs.                | 89                    | 78                             | +9  |
| 30–44 yrs.                | 83                    | 75                             | +8  |
| 45–59 yrs.                | 67                    | 77                             | –10   |
| 60+ yrs.                  | 65                    | 79                             | –14   |
| Education (highest level) |                       |                                |   |
| Elementary                | 64                    | 73                             | –9  |
| High school diploma       | 81                    | 79                             | +2  |
| University                | 86                    | 82                             | +4  |
| Occupation                |                       |                                |   |
| Employees                 | 80                    | 77                             | +3  |
| Business owners           | 79                    | 79                             | 0   |
| Students                  | 91                    | 84                             | +7  |
| Retired                   | 60                    | 78                             | –18   |
| Housewives                | 82                    | 75                             | +7  |
| Unemployed                | 44                    | 65                             | –21   |
| Party (vote intention)    |                       |                                |   |
| US-DEU                    | 89                    | 92                             | –2  |
| ODS                       | 91                    | 86                             | +5  |
| KDU-ČSL                   | 89                    | 84                             | +5  |
| ČSSD                      | 76                    | 82                             | –6  |
| KSČM                      | 19                    | 37                             | –18   |
| TOTAL (%)                 | 75                    | 78                             | –3  |
| N                         | 663                   | ≈12 500                        |   |

*Note:* The difference in the column estimates relate to how much the estimates from the survey in late 2001 were over or under the results of the exit poll on 13–14 June 2003. Percentages here refer to those who voted or stated that they would definitely vote 'yes'.

**Table 3. Cross-tabulation of preferences for EU membership by attitudes toward the economy and identity (%)**

|  | Row (%)               |                   |                        |                | N    | Column (%) |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|------|------------|
|  | Against EU membership | For EU membership | Undecided / Don't know | Would not vote |      |            |
| All respondents  | 14                    | 44                | 36                     | 6              | 1140 | 100        |
| Winners & Losers Model   |                       |                   |                        |                |      |            |
| Loser in the post-communist transition process                         | 17                    | 34                | <b>42</b>              | 7              | 805  | 71         |
| Winner in the post-communist transition process                        | 8                     | <b>67</b>         | 23                     | 2              | 335  | 29         |
| Free market orientation – no   | 17                    | 36                | 40                     | 7              | 877  | 77         |
| Free market orientation – yes  | 5                     | <b>71</b>         | 23                     | 1              | 263  | 23         |
| Feelings toward current economic system in Czech Republic – other      | 20                    | 25                | <b>47</b>              | 8              | 407  | 36         |
| Feelings toward current economic system in Czech Republic – positive   | 11                    | <b>54</b>         | 31                     | 4              | 733  | 64         |
| Feelings toward economic system in Czech Republic in 5 yrs. – other    | <b>20</b>             | 24                | <b>48</b>              | 8              | 418  | 37         |
| Feelings toward economic system in Czech Republic in 5 yrs. – positive | 11                    | 55                | 30                     | 4              | 722  | 63         |
| International Trade Model  |                       |                   |                        |                |      |            |
| Low-skill worker in a region with a lower than mean per capita GDP     | 14                    | 48                | 35                     | 4              | 883  | 77         |
| Low-skill worker in a region with a higher than mean per capita GDP    | 17                    | 30                | 42                     | <b>11</b>      | 257  | 23         |
| Medium-skill worker in a region with a lower than mean per capita GDP  | 15                    | 41                | 38                     | 7              | 870  | 76         |
| Medium-skill worker in a region with a higher than mean per capita GDP | 13                    | <b>54</b>         | 31                     | 1              | 270  | 24         |
| High-skill worker in a region with a lower than mean per capita GDP    | 15                    | 41                | 38                     | 6              | 1027 | 90         |
| High-skill worker in a region with a higher than mean per capita GDP   | 11                    | <b>65</b>         | 23                     | 1              | 113  | 10         |

|   |           |           |           |   |      |    |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---|------|----|
| Willing to work outside Czech Republic after accession – uncommitted  | 16        | 40        | 38        | 6 | 986  | 86 |
| Willing to work outside Czech Republic after accession – yes          | 3         | <b>70</b> | 23        | 5 | 154  | 14 |
| FDI Model   |           |           |           |   |      |    |
| Some doubts about foreign direct investment in Czech Republic         | 22        | 25        | <b>44</b> | 8 | 710  | 62 |
| Convinced supporter of foreign direct investment in Czech Republic    | 2         | <b>74</b> | 23        | 1 | 430  | 38 |
| Identity Model  |           |           |           |   |      |    |
| EU membership will lead to a loss of sovereignty                      | 13        | 44        | 37        | 6 | 925  | 81 |
| EU membership will not lead to a loss of sovereignty                  | <b>20</b> | 44        | 33        | 4 | 215  | 19 |
| Believe in defending national interests – uncommitted response        | 13        | 46        | 35        | 6 | 986  | 86 |
| Believe in defending national interests – yes                         | <b>21</b> | 30        | <b>45</b> | 5 | 154  | 14 |
| Very proud of Czech citizens – uncommitted response                   | 13        | 43        | 38        | 6 | 902  | 79 |
| Very proud of Czech citizens – yes                                    | 18        | 48        | 30        | 4 | 238  | 21 |
| Party politics is based on national traditions vs. EU interests – no  | 14        | 44        | 37        | 6 | 1099 | 96 |
| Party politics is based on national traditions vs. EU interests – yes | <b>27</b> | 41        | 27        | 5 | 41   | 4  |
| Identifies with local community – no                                  | 14        | 48        | 34        | 5 | 498  | 44 |
| Identifies with local community – yes                                 | 15        | 41        | 38        | 6 | 642  | 56 |
| Identifies with region – no   | 14        | 43        | 37        | 6 | 985  | 86 |
| Identifies with region – yes  | 14        | 48        | 35        | 4 | 155  | 14 |
| Identifies with country – no  | 14        | 42        | 37        | 6 | 922  | 81 |
| Identifies with country – yes   | 15        | 50        | 32        | 3 | 218  | 19 |

*Note:* Row percentages (to the left of the number of cases) represent the distribution of responses on EU accession for each variable, e.g. 34% of those who were losers in the post-communist transition process favour EU accession. Column percentages (to the right of the number of cases) refer to how much each response option constituted of the total sample, e.g. 71% felt they were losers in the post-communist transition process while 29% were winners. Numbers in bold refer to estimates that significantly ( $p \leq .05$ ) exceed those of the total electorate, e.g. losers in the post-communist transition process were significantly more likely than all voters to state they were undecided about voting in the accession referendum.

for December 2001, but the survey estimate was just 4%. Similarly, the attenuation effects due to social desirability were also evident for the intention to vote for the Communist Party or for feeling closest to this party – where in the survey of late 2001 it had an 11% level of support. Seven months later, in the 2002 general elections, the Communist Party attracted 18.5% of the popular vote. The differences between the survey used here and the exit poll are in large part the result of well-known methodological artefacts and do not point to strong campaign effects for these specific groups.

Given the wide range of questions asked in the survey examined in this paper, it is a unique and invaluable instrument for estimating 'core' popular support for accession beyond the short-term effects of a campaign – which in the Czech case may have had its greatest impact in ensuring a level of voter turnout comparable with the previous general election in 2002. While this was important in ensuring legitimacy in the decision to join the EU, it was not as crucial a consideration as in Poland and Slovakia, which had participation thresholds for having binding referendum results.

Before describing the results of our regression models it is instructive first to examine a simple profile of preferences for accession by attitudes toward the economy. The cross-tabulations and difference of proportions estimates presented in Table 3 suggest that economic attitudes were more strongly linked with opinions on accession than those related to sense of identity. Many of the patterns evident in Table 3 are consonant with our hypotheses, and we will discuss these in greater detail in the following subsections.

However, Table 3 is important, as it provides us with estimates (in the final column on the right) of the frequency distributions of all variables used in the models reported later in Table 4. Such data is important, as they facilitate the assessment of the significance of the regression results. For example, it is important to know that seven in ten respondents felt they were losers in the post-communist transition process and that such perceptions among the majority of the electorate translated into indecision about the benefits of accession rather than into opposition.

### *Winners and Losers Model*

As the first column of Table 4 shows, each of the predicted effects of Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky's [2002] model was found to be statistically significant. Being a 'winner' in the post-communist transition (H.1) process increased the probability ( $p=+.48$ ) that a respondent would state that they would support accession rather than vote 'no' ( $p=-.08$ ) in the referendum.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, self-identified winners in the post-communist transition process in contrast to losers were much less apt

<sup>11</sup> The probabilities reported refer to the change in probability for giving a 'yes' (or 'no', 'don't know' or 'will not vote') response to the EU accession question across the entire range of the independent variable. For example, the probability of supporting accession

( $p=-.39$ ) to say 'don't know' and were very unlikely ( $p<.001$ ) to state that they would not vote in the referendum. Ideologically, those who identified themselves as having a free market orientation (H.2) were more likely ( $p=.16$ ) to be in favour of accession, indicating a strong association in citizens' minds between the integration process and market liberalisation.

A positive assessment of the national economy (H.3a) and being optimistic about the future (H.3b) were also significant factors but their effects were less powerful than the other variables in the winners and losers model. Theoretically one might have expected the prospective economic measure to have had the most powerful impact, as the benefits of accession were a future goal. For Czech citizens, current and prospective assessments of the economy were moderately correlated ( $r=.47$ ), which might be the result of a question ordering or priming effect, as the two items were sequential in the survey.

### *International Trade Liberalisation Model*

Like Gabel's [1998b] economic interest and political preference model, the international trade liberalisation approach is based on insights derived from the Heckscher-Ohlin theory of international trade preferences. However, the explanatory variables used are somewhat different. Gabel created an interaction variable using occupation and relative wages / human capital. In contrast, the trade liberalisation model implemented here focuses on the differential impact that regional (rather than cross-national) economic structures will have on preferences for accession.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the model tested in this research takes into account labour mobility (i.e. migration to Prague from regions of industrial decline), a key consideration in trade theory.

Using education level as a measure of worker skill proved to be more robust than using income. The results shown in the second column of Table 4 show that skilled labour in rich regions was most strongly associated with support for accession. Therefore, in line with our expectations (H.4a) low-skilled workers in richer regions tended to be against accession, though this is not a statistically significant effect. In contrast, those with medium and high skills (H.4b-c) were increasingly likely to give a 'yes' ( $p=+.18$  and  $+.25$  respectively) rather than a 'no' response ( $p=-.05$  and  $-.07$  respectively).<sup>13</sup> These results match the findings of Gabel's [1998a] analysis of mass attitudes with EU-12 member states toward membership between

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increases by .48 (or 48%) across the entire range of our 8-point 'winners-losers' ordinal variable.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that the interpretation of interaction terms in nonlinear models requires considerable care [see Ai and Norton 2003; Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006; and Berry, Esarey and Rubin 2007].

<sup>13</sup> Additional tests of these interaction variables using a methodology developed by Brambor, Clark and Golder [2006] confirm the results noted in Table 4. Models including all interaction variables are not reported for reasons of brevity.



Table 4. Multinomial logit analysis of micro-economic explanations of preferences for EU membership (will vote 'yes' coefficients)

| Variables  | Winners<br>& Losers<br>Model | International<br>Trade Model | FDI<br>Model        | Economic<br>Model   | Identity<br>Model | Economic<br>& Identity<br>Model |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Winner in the post-communist transition process (H.1)                  | 2.058 ***<br>(.510)          |                              |                     | .314<br>(.573)      |                   | .452<br>(.588)                  |
| Free market orientation (H.2)  | 1.112 ***<br>(.324)          |                              |                     | .461<br>(.392)      |                   | .398<br>(.399)                  |
| Positive feelings toward current economic system (H.3a)                | .723 ***<br>(.216)           |                              |                     | .404<br>(.262)      |                   | .389<br>(.265)                  |
| Positive view of economic situation in five years (H.3b)               | .703 **<br>(.226)            |                              |                     | .249<br>(.269)      |                   | .220<br>(.271)                  |
| Low-skill * relative per capita GDP in region (H.4a)                   |                              | -.666<br>(.573)              |                     | -.110<br>(.680)     |                   | -.318<br>(.679)                 |
| Medium-skill * relative per capita GDP in region (H.4b)                |                              | .915 *<br>(.510)             |                     | .312<br>(.592)      |                   | .284<br>(.599)                  |
| High-skill * relative per capita GDP in region (H.4c)                  |                              | 1.332 **<br>(.659)           |                     | .517<br>(.670)      |                   | .598<br>(.693)                  |
| Willing to work outside Czech Republic after accession (H.5)           |                              | 3.744 ***<br>(.599)          |                     | 2.859 ***<br>(.639) |                   | 2.847 ***<br>(.651)             |
| Support foreign direct investment, FDI (H.6)                           |                              |                              | 7.658 ***<br>(.552) | 6.999 ***<br>(.602) |                   | 7.026 ***<br>(.616)             |
| EU membership: loss of sovereignty (H.7a)                              |                              |                              |                     |                     | -.414 *<br>(.231) | -.449<br>(.290)                 |
| Party politics is based on national traditions vs. EU interests (H.7a) |                              |                              |                     |                     | -.710 *<br>(.412) | -1.194 **<br>(.513)             |

\*\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$ , \*\*  $p \leq .05$ , \*  $p \leq .10$  All Wald chi2 estimates are significant ( $p \leq .001$ ).

*Note:* Opposition to EU accession is the base category used for comparison. Coefficients for control variables are not reported. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. These are based on Huber/White/sandwich estimator of variance. All variables have been rescaled [0-1] to aid interpretation as all coefficients have the same metric those variables with larger values in the same model indicating stronger effects. All models were estimated with the same number of cases ( $N=1140$ ).

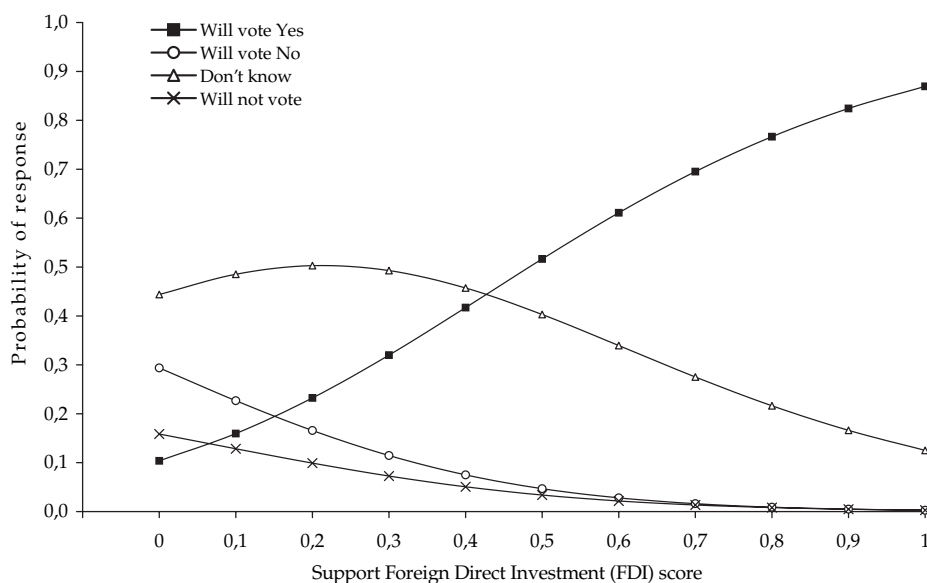
1975 and 1992. If the Heckscher-Ohlin logic is correct these results suggest that the pattern of public opinion in the Czech economy is better typified as one stemming from a capital-rich rather than a labour-abundant economy.

Turning our attention now to the willingness of workers to take advantage of the opportunity to work outside of the Czech Republic in another EU member state, we find that a willingness to work elsewhere in the EU following membership (H.5) increased the likelihood of voting for accession considerably ( $p=+.38$ ) and reduced the probability of giving an uncommitted answer ( $p=-.17$ ). This free movement of labour variable is in fact the most powerful factor identified in our trade liberalisation model and represents an interesting extension of Gabel's [1998a] work.

#### *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Model*

The results shown in the third column of Table 4 indicate that positive attitudes toward the economic benefits of FDI (as predicted in H.6) are strongly correlated with support for accession. According to the estimated model, respondents who

**Figure 1. Probability of supporting, opposing, being uncommitted, or not voting in the accession referendum by support for foreign direct investment (FDI)**



*Note:* The scores for FDI indicate low support (0) or high support (1). The predicted probabilities relate to the likelihood of giving a specific response for a given level of support for FDI. Predicted probabilities calculated using a procedure developed by Tomz et al. [2003].

favoured foreign direct investment in the Czech Republic were much more likely to say they would vote 'yes' ( $p=+.84$ ) than vote 'no' ( $p=-.37$ ). Moreover, as Figure 1 demonstrates these pro-FDI respondents were also unlikely to give a non-committal or 'would not vote' response.

The association between seeing 'positive benefits for EU membership' and being supportive of FDI is very high ( $\eta^2=.70$ ). It is interesting to note that there are less strong statistical associations between FDI and being an economic winner from the post-communist transition ( $\tau b=.34$ ) or having a free market orientation ( $\tau b=.35$ ). Such bivariate analyses suggest that in the minds of Czech citizens FDI was strongly associated with the benefits of EU membership.

In sum, accession meant investment and consequently increased employment opportunities. However, these benefits were likely only to accrue directly to those working in foreign firms and those employed in domestic industries using advanced technologies and more particularly those working in the services rather than manufacturing sectors [Ayyagari and Kosová 2006]. While we have insufficient survey data to test these occupational differences, the general picture is one where overall public opinion in late 2001 judged FDI policies to be a success, and that accession to the EU would further this virtuous cycle of increased competitiveness and employment.

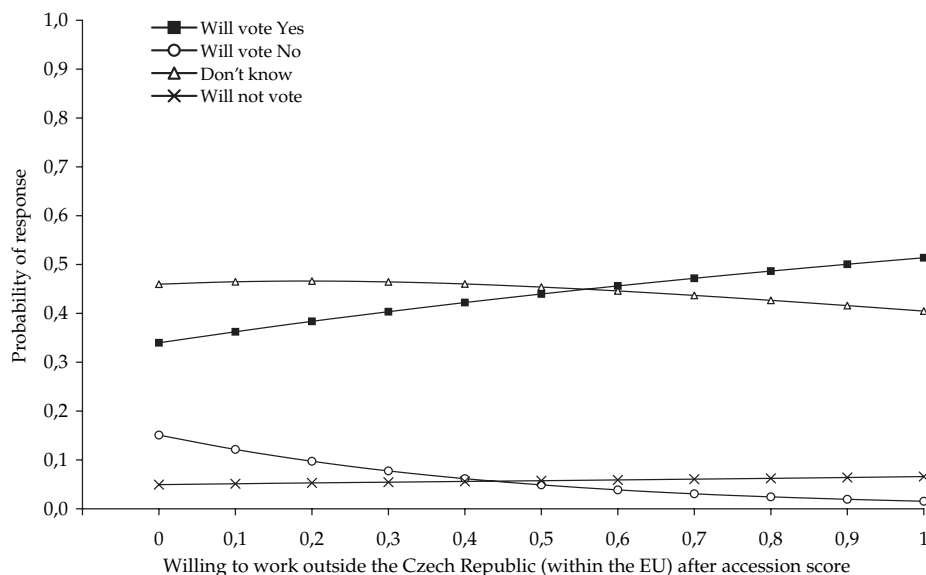
### *Combined Micro-Economic Explanation Model*

Looking at a combined micro-economic model, in the fourth column of Table 4 the most salient feature is the strong impact that FDI had on support for accession along with willingness to pursue employment opportunities elsewhere in the EU. The impact of attitudes toward FDI is quite impressive and is more apparent in a graphical presentation of the model estimates. Figure 1 reveals that the probability of supporting accession increases from 10 to 87% as a respondent moves from being against FDI to being fully supportive of it.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, Figure 2 shows that the impact of being positive about the opportunities of increased labour mobility with accession is much less pronounced. Those who were certain that they would not look for employment outside the Czech Republic after EU membership were not strongly against accession. Moreover, those individuals who were very likely to look for work outside of the Czech Republic within the EU were split in a ratio of 5 to 4 in favour of accession or not expressing an opinion.

<sup>14</sup> The predicted probabilities in Figures 3 and 4 were calculated using a stochastic simulation procedure implemented using Clarify 2.1 module within STATA 9.1 [King, Tomz and Wittenberg 2000; Tomz, Wittenberg and King 2003]. Where appropriate, all independent and control variables were held at their mean values or set to zero in the case of dummy variables. Household income was set to its modal value. The reported probabilities are the mean of one thousand (Monte Carlo simulation) estimations.

**Figure 2. Probability of supporting, opposing, being uncommitted, or not voting in the accession referendum by willingness to work elsewhere within the EU following accession**



*Note:* The scores for willing to work (outside the Czech Republic) within the EU following accession indicate low likelihood (0) or high likelihood (1). The predicted probabilities relate to the likelihood of giving a specific response for a given level of support for willingness to seek work opportunities within the EU following accession. Predicted probabilities calculated using a procedure developed by Tomz et al. [2003].

The exact source of such ambivalence is difficult to determine. There was no public discussion in late 2001 about EU-15 member states restricting the mobility of Czech workers following accession. Arguments that Czechs may have been doubtful about the likelihood of completely free movement of labour following accession are therefore difficult to sustain on the basis of the contemporary evidence.

This suggests that a key economic reason for supporting accession in the Czech Republic related to employment. Significantly, the economic logic implied by the Heckscher-Ohlin theory highlighting the differences between different (skilled) segments of the labour force seems to have been less important than attitudinal factors. Moreover, although Tucker, Pacek and Berinsky's [2002] 'winners and losers' model does help to explain popular support for accession in the Czech Republic, it is not as powerful an explanation as those variables (i.e. FDI and labour mobility) that relate to future business and employment opportunities.

However, the variables in our winners and losers model have more powerful effects in explaining when respondents were likely to state that they would vote 'yes' rather than say 'don't know' or 'will not vote'. In short, the winners and losers model would appear primarily to refer to whether Czech citizens were interested or engaged in the accession issue. Attitudes toward current and future general economic prospects exhibited similar characteristics. Having examined in some detail the micro-economic explanations of support for accession, it is important to evaluate a competing explanation of mass orientations toward the EU.

### *Identity Model*

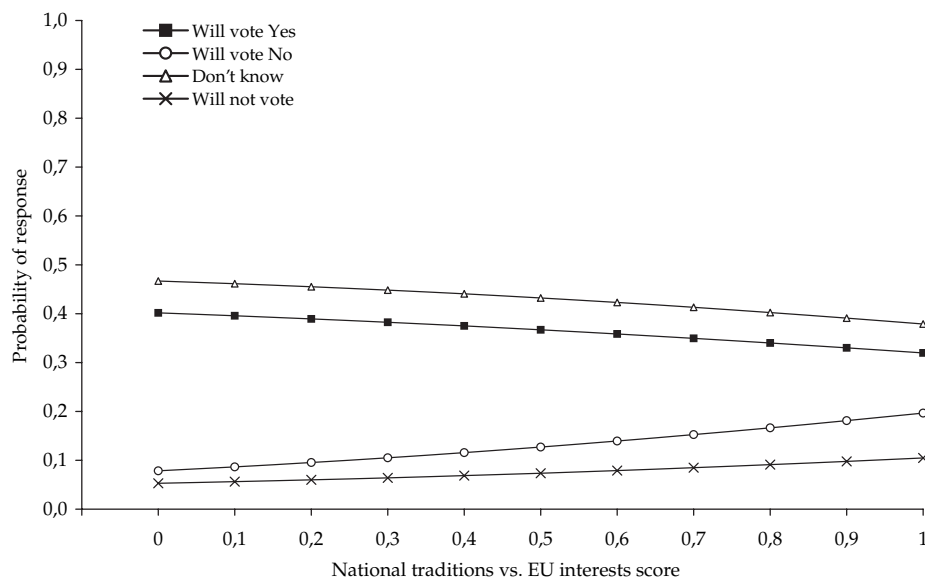
In our identity model we included variables for national and sub-national (local area and region) territorial attachments. Moreover, the identity model also includes items capturing perceived threats to national interests and a loss of sovereignty. Details of these variables are given in the appendix. This set of seven variables represents a useful collection of measures to evaluate many of the key themes highlighted in previous research assessing the link between identity and attitudes toward the EU. Preliminary summated rating scale analysis reveals that this group of items do not refer to a single identity scale as the average inter-item correlation is rather low ( $r=.04$ ). Moreover, this analysis shows that loss of sovereignty, defending national interests, and local identity are negatively correlated with national pride and identity at the regional and national levels.

Such results suggest that sense of identity in the Czech Republic and attitudes toward the EU are dependent on the primary level of identity felt by the citizen. If the respondent had a strong sense of local identity they were likely to be less in favour of accession than those with a higher territorial attachment. The coefficients presented in the penultimate column concur with the basic logic expressed in H.7c. However, the evidence presented in Table 3 suggests that level of identity is not likely to be statistically important in explaining variation in support for accession. This is confirmed in the results presented in column 5 of Table 4.

In fact, the results presented in Table 4 confirm the remaining two hypotheses for the identity model (H.7a, and the first part of H.7b). The main impact of having a 'defend the national interest' orientation was to increase the probability of voting 'no' ( $p=+.16$ ) or replying 'don't know' ( $p=+.09$ ). If we examine Figure 3 we see that the overall effect of this variable is to reduce support for accession ( $p=+.16$ ), or replying 'don't know' ( $p=+.09$ ). However, these effects in comparison to those noted earlier for FDI are relatively weak.

In contrast, the primary effects of thinking of accession as involving a loss of sovereignty or seeing party politics as a defence of national interests against the EU was to motivate the expression of definite rather than non-committal responses-

**Figure 3. Probability of supporting, opposing, being uncommitted, or not voting in the accession referendum by belief that party politics is primarily shaped by national traditions versus EU interests**



*Note:* The scores for the belief that party politics is shaped by national traditions vs. EU interests indicate low belief in this cleavage (0) or strong belief (1). The predicted probabilities relate to the likelihood of giving a specific response for a given level of belief that party politics is primarily shaped by national traditions vs. EU interests. Predicted probabilities calculated using a procedure developed by Tomz et al. [2003].

es. However, having these opinions did not dramatically increase the probability of being negative toward accession ( $p=+.01$  and  $+.02$  respectively).<sup>15</sup>

In overall terms, the identity model fails to explain much of the variation in Czech support for accession ( $R\text{-squared}=.09$ ) for two main reasons: (a) variables such as loss of identity were not strongly associated with intended vote choice in the accession referendum, and (b) many of the other variables of interest involved small numbers of cases resulting in coefficients with the hypothesised effects in Table 4 though lacking significance. In our final set of analyses, we will endeavour to assess whether economic or identity factors had the most powerful effects on shaping preferences in the Czech accession referendum.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that this group of respondents constituted less than 4% ( $n=41$ ) of the total sample. Therefore, these effects are of more interest in terms of a future Eurosceptic orientation among Czech voters.



### Is identity more important than economics?

Previous research which has examined if economic or national identity considerations have a stronger impact on public opinion toward the EU found that identity was more important [Hooghe and Marks 2004, 2005]. This was the situation within the EU-15 member states in 2002. With regard to the 2004 accession states there is insufficient research to demonstrate if a similar pattern prevails. However, as noted earlier Rohrschneider and Whitefield [2004, 2006: 147] using survey data from the 1990s have argued that public opinion on the EU in post-communist states is better explained by political and economic values than by instrumental economic considerations. Here we will explore whether identity rather than economics was the driving force behind support, or opposition to accession in the Czech Republic.

In our final model, we test a combined economic and identity model with the goal of observing which specific variables retain significance. This facilitates testing which variables from our various economic and identity models have the greatest impact in explaining variation in preferences for accession. The multinomial logistic regression analysis shown in the final column of Table 4 reveals that our economic variables remain the strongest predictors of support for accession. The only identity model measure to exhibit a similar level of significance was the item related to perceiving party politics in terms of 'national traditions vs. EU interests'. Those who saw party politics in this manner were, as expected, more likely to vote against accession ( $p=+.13$ ).

Using information measures of model performance it is possible to investigate which model provides the 'best' fit. Using the Akaike information criterion (AIC) or the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) the model with the smallest value is considered to be the most superior. The results presented at the very bottom of Table 4 demonstrate that the full economic model outperforms the identity model by a considerable margin. Moreover, the best individual model of the six tested is the FDI explanation. In contrast, the identity model provides the poorest explanation of all the models tested. Therefore, it is clear that economics was more important than identity for Czech voters in considering how to vote in the accession referendum.

### Conclusion

In this article we have examined how economic factors influence citizen support for European integration. We have seen that mass support for integration involves consideration of two debates: a) Which is more important in explaining mass support for accession – instrumental economic preferences or identity-based considerations? b) Do models of mass support for integration developed in Western Europe also apply in Central and Eastern Europe? In reviewing the literature surrounding both of these debates it is obvious that further empirical research is required.

The evidence presented in this article has shown with regard to the first debate that within the Czech Republic in late 2001 economics was more important than identity in explaining support for EU membership. This is not to suggest that concerns over loss of sovereignty, fears about defending national interests, or perceiving politics as revolving around a national tradition versus EU interest axis were not important. Rather they were very much less important in explaining support for accession than economic considerations.

With regard to the second debate the evidence presented shows that models of mass support for integration developed over the last three decades in Western Europe do have application in countries such as the Czech Republic. Our brief literature review revealed that there are no definitive economic models of what drives mass support for integration. Rather there are different types of economic explanations. In this article, we have shown with regard to conditions prevailing in one country in Central and Eastern Europe the importance of economic considerations as a motivating factor in explaining individual level support for EU membership.

The results presented illustrate that the influential 'winners and losers' explanation of support for integration was less important than attitudes toward FDI in the Czech Republic. However, this difference warns us of the importance of i) timing and ii) choice of dependent variable. Different research results relating to vague proposals for future accession, vote choice in a future referendum, and attitudes toward integration post accession undoubtedly refer to qualitatively different things for respondents.

Now that the citizens of Eastern and Western Europe live within the EU we are in a better position to compare 'like with like' and hence develop pan-European explanations of mass support for integration. In this respect, some of the results presented would seem to support Eichenberg and Dalton's [1993: 510] proposition that if the EU 'has promised anything, it has promised the enhancement of member states' economic welfare'. Of course, the quip 'it's the economy, stupid' represents only one aspect of how citizens evaluate the integration process. However, it is economics that has most often been used to 'sell' the European project during successive enlargements. Therefore, it seems sensible to think that it will inform attitudes toward the benefits of continued EU membership.

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## Appendix

The analysis of public attitudes toward accession in the Czech Republic relies on a mass survey fielded in late October 26 and early November 5 2001 – eighteen months before the referendum in mid-June 2003. This survey was managed by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CVVM). This is a specialised section within the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. This survey has a typical methodology for this series of opinion polls. This national face-to-face national survey interviewed 1199 adults aged fifteen years and older using quota sampling on the basis of region, size of community, sex, age, and education. There were almost two hundred interviewers (n=193) who undertook an average of six interviews each. In the analysis in this paper, respondents aged seventeen years and under were excluded, as they would not have been eligible to vote in June 2003. This leaves a sample size of 1140. The sample is representative of the entire territory of the Czech Republic with a mean of 16 interviews undertaken in each Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) – the district (*okres*) (n=71). The response rate for this survey is unknown. No weighting variables were produced to reflect, for example the size of the household from which a respondent was selected. Two versions of this survey data exist. The first is part of a pooled survey series deposited at the German Social Data Archive, Cologne, where all variable labels and documentation are in English. The second version is available from CVVM in the Czech language only. This dataset has a much more extensive set of variables and is the one used in this paper.

## Independent Variables

### *Winners and Losers Model*

#### *Winner in the post-communism transition process*

A summated rating scale was derived from the following seven survey items. For brevity only those options of direct interest are reported. (1) positive rating of current economic situation of the household, (2) good household economic situation in five years time, (3) household has sufficient income, (4) household has been able to save in the last five years, (5) the household has a video cassette recorder, (6) the household owns a car, (7) the respondent has access to the internet. This scale has a Cronbach alpha of .70.

#### *Free market orientation*

Which general political attitude do you most strongly support? The respondent was only allowed to pick one option from a set of five or reply other, none or don't know. (1) Pro market.



*Positive feelings toward current economic system / economic situation in five years*

I would like to show you an evaluation scale on how well the economy functions. The best score is plus 100 and is on the top end of the scale; the worst score is minus 100 and is at the bottom of the scale. (b) Please locate on this scale our current economic system. (c) Please locate on this scale our economic system in five years. Non-committal responses were coded to the midpoint of the scale, i.e. zero.

*International Trade Liberalisation Model*

*Skill level of the respondent \* relative GDP per capita in region*

Skill of respondent as indicated by level of education (elementary, secondary or university). Incomplete secondary education is the reference category. Each of these variables was used to create an interaction variable with the relative per capita GDP of the region (*kraj*) where a respondent lives. The GDP data for 2001 is taken from figures published by the Czech Statistical Office.

*Willing to work outside the CR after accession*

Are you personally interested in working in one of the EU member countries after the Czech Republic joins the EU? This item had seven response options: (a) Yes, will definitely try; (b) Yes, might try; (c) Would be interested if offered a job; (d) It's too early to say; (e) No, probably will not be interested; (f) No definitely not interested; (g) Don't know. The few don't know responses (n=40) were recoded to the modal category – option (e). Recoded 1=1, else=0.

*Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Model*

A summated rating scale constructed from a series of five items asked in sequence on various aspects of foreign direct investment (FDI). Respondents were given a number of options. For brevity only those of interest are reported here. (1) Foreign direct investment makes the economy better; (2) Foreign direct investment builds up new companies, which helps the Czech economy; (3) Czech govt. should not support Czech companies to retain market share; (4) Czech govt. should encourage foreign investment in Czech companies; (5) State authorities should encourage foreign direct investment. The most positive response was coded as 1 else 0 to capture support for foreign direct investment. This scale has a Cronbach alpha of .75.

### *Identity Model*

Do you think that Czech membership in the EU will bring ... (d) EU membership will bring no loss of sovereignty

Which general political attitude do you most strongly support? The respondent was only allowed to pick one option from a set of five, or reply other, none, or don't know. (4) Defend national interests.

Are you proud of the country's citizens? (1) Very proud, (2) Somewhat proud, (3) Not proud, (4) Not at all proud, (5) Don't know. Recoded 1=1, else=0.

I am going to show you some reasons where people allege there are differences between political parties in our country. Which of the following statements best represents these differences? (6) Some political parties support national tradition, while others stress the merits of European integration.

Which of the following options do you most closely identify with? And which option do you identify with secondly? (1) Local community or town where you live, (2) Region, (3) Country, (4) Europe, (5) Other, (6) Don't know. Please note that for this research only the first options were used.

### **Control Variables**

Control variables are not reported because of (a) space constraints and (b) they are not the primary focus of the models presented.

Female (coded as 1)

Only those eligible to vote in the referendum in June 2003 were included, 17yrs+

Level of urbanisation of a region, taken from Czech Statistical Office (2001)

Respondent works in a state owned enterprise

Respondent works in the state bureaucracy / civil service

Respondent works in the private sector in a Czech-owned business

Respondent works in the private sector in a foreign-owned business

Respondent is unemployed

Household income < 499 CZK per month (third category used as base)

Household income 500-1999 CZK per month

Household income 5000-19 999 CZK per month

Household income 20 000-99 999 CZK per month

Household income 100 000+ CZK per month

Level of religious belief (atheist, agnostic, believe in god)

All regions, except Prague (n=13) were included as dummy variables to capture any variance not dealt with by the other regional variables such as urbanisation. Apart from the need for a reference regional variable, preliminary analysis also indicated that using a single Prague region variable resulted in collinearity with a number of other variables, such as income, urbanisation, and unemployment. In preliminary models each region's relative per capita GDP was included as a separate variable, but these variables had insignificant effects. Level of education is not used as control variable, as it was used to measure the skill level of the respondent.